

Réfléchir

A Paradigm of Self Reflections and Creative Insight



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Arka Bhattacharya

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**Bridge Center
2015**

With sincere reverence I'm dedicating this book to you,
Professor *Chinmoy Guha*,
Always inspiring me to be the best...

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*"We spend our days, each one of us, in looking for the secret of life.
Well, the secret of life is in art."*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Before I begin my prelude with *Réfléchir* it will be perhaps worthwhile to shower my reverence to few people whom I deeply value and love as they have played a vital role in shaping my academic career. First, I would like to mention the name of Dr. Chinmoy Guha whose effervescence lectures used to cast a mesmerizing spell on me. A French laureate, possessing vast extraordinary boundless knowledge, yet so humble, I've never seen in my life, always guiding me whenever I confronted with a dilemma. Secondly, Dr. Sukanti Dutta, whom I consider my intellectual guide, advisor and mentor. Without his immeasurable guidance and immense support I would never have been here. A venerable person whom I love worshipping. Thirdly, my parents of course, Professor Arup Kumar Bhattacharya and Monolina Bhattacharya who still now endure my tantrums and whims. Nevertheless, their inspiration matters a lot. Finally, I would like to mention you Shree (Sreejata Basu) as your illimitable aid and endless succor counts and values a lot.

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I hereby express my sincere gratefulness to Professor Dr. Ecaterina Patrascu, Bucharest (Romania) who has taken pains and efforts in publishing all my research papers under the title *Réfléchir- A Paradigm of Self Reflections and Creative Insights*.

Thank you ma'am for your kind patience, inspiration and assistance!

Arka Bhattachaya

FOREWORD

In our contemporary, technology – ridden world, in which we are fighting time and so very often we find ourselves defeated and engulfed in it, we sometimes become melancholic and dream back to a world that used to be at our disposal, the world of our own thoughts and passions, the realm of our genuine concerns. A lost possibility, some may remark, since what prevails today is the pragmatism of our deeds and ideas.

However, out of nowhere, or when we least expect it to happen, there are voices that call us back and make us aware of the beauty that seemed lost, voices that halt our senseless hastiness and confront us with world's most treasured heritage – literature.

Arka Bhattachaya is one of these rare but daring voices. A University of Calcutta graduate, with a strong background in postmodern philosophy and literature, Arka Bhattachaya surpasses his specialization and carries us, his readers, back into the literary time and mesmerizes us while inquiring into the meanings of Ancient myths, Renaissance, and the contemporary reality. What fascinates the reader is the freshness of his wonder, the subtlety of his questioning, and the persuasiveness of his

hermeneutical approach. Traveling with Arka in time, back and forward again, is, without doubt, one of the most inspiring journeys we could experience, at the end of which we shall find ourselves wanderers, inquirers, and, above all, enriched souls.

Beyond any doubt, Arka Bhattachaya's book, *Réfléchir- A Paradigm of Self Reflections and Creative Insight*, proves him, as he likes to refer to himself, an *aficionado* of literature and philosophy, at the beginning of a quest that we, his readers, will faithfully join.

Dr. Ecaterina Patrascu

Bucharest, Romania

INTRODUCTION

Being a connoisseur of art and literature 'I firmly believe I've to complete, the role assigned to me here, where I dream and breathe', and the assignment is nonetheless but to read, think, ponder and research.

Réfléchir- A Paradigm of Self Reflections and Creative Insight is one such book where I've assembled all my research papers envioning topic on different field and area. Before I examine the efficacy of my title it will be perhaps worthwhile to say in which field I did my post graduation and the topics on which I've researched. Since this book doesn't deal with any one particular topic, I feel it is necessary to bring in the entire subject matter and its contents in one full circle. Having studied the Postmodern Philosophy and Literature from the University of Calcutta I grew an affinity for researching on postmodern aspect only. Later I felt the need to expatiate my knowledge. As Frank Zappa has said, 'So many books, so little time'. I feel time is quite ripe for me to explore on multiform aspects of literature and in doing so I've enriched my knowledge and intellect. Research aids in discovering the wide dimensions of unread and unexplored area. And like Doctor Faustus let me ratify in a positive sense that

I too have a lust for knowledge (I don't have any kind of lust for occult science and preternatural philosophy) and since being pursued by it I always keep myself occupied in communing and unveiling the manifold aspect of it.

Réfléchir derives from a French word which means to reflect, think and ponder. The reason why I have culled this title is because it precisely describes the mood and tone which will enable my readers to experience the mélange of different articles that has been enlisted in this opus. They will delve deep into the fathomless sea of literary art and think as well as reflect upon the kaleidoscopic aspects of Post Structuralism, Postmodern art and philosophy, Ancient myth and history, the inescapable '*nemesis*' of the Renaissance hero Faustus and most importantly about inconceivable Shakespeare. The creative insight which illumines each of my research work will surely benefit the readers to think, to ponder, to imbibe and reflect the myriad undisclosed concepts of literary philosophy and society in general; though I firmly believe in this renowned phrase steeped in irony and satire- 'Reading is thinking with someone else's head instead of one's own.' However, let my readers not think about the aforementioned phrase, rather they are cordially welcomed to be a part of this literary voyage.

Notes:

1. '*I Believe*' (poem) by Brucellish K. Sangma.
2. Arthur Schopenhauer on *The Art of Literature*.

Arka Bhattacharya

The legends environing the royal mansion of Thebes incited Sophocles to compose an austere trilogy about mankind's struggle and striving against fate. *King Oedipus* explores the story of an unfortunate man who brings pestilence to Thebes for crimes he does not reckon he has committed and then inflicts a brutal punishment upon himself which is undoubtedly horrific and stupefying! With profound insights into the human condition, it is a ravaging delineation of a ruler, brought down by his own solemn ratification. *Oedipus Rex* or *Oedipus Tyrannus* composed by Sophocles is deemed as one of the most intriguing Greek tragedies as it explores Athenian tenets of religious beliefs and the conception of human impotence, imbecility and feebleness in the presence of destiny. As Friedrich Nietzsche has commented, "Sophocles conceived doomed Oedipus, the greatest sufferer of the Greek stage, as a pattern of nobility, destined to error and misery despite his wisdom, yet exercising a beneficent influence upon his environment in virtue of his boundless grief."

The reason behind Oedipus' downfall has been argued by the critics over centuries and their main area of concentration is

Oedipus' "Problem of Guilt". Was Oedipus guilty? What was his guilt then? He is a scapegoat; who has pitted into the vortex of sins (without even reckoning the veritable truth) and after which he has suffered to escape into the wilderness. A victimized man (being duped by his fate and destiny), who had once rescued the people of Thebes from the clutches of Sphinx by unfolding the confounding riddle, has now been shoved off into the fatal flagitious jaws of death, by the mere foul play of destiny!

Was he really guilty? What was his guilt? His lust for mother? Sexual propensity and proclivity for his mother? Incest? Was his lust and sexual desire for his mother has given rise to the term *Oedipus Complex*?

What does it signify? What is this *Complex* and where is this *Complexity*?

Why has Sigmund Freud in his renowned book *The Interpretation of Dreams* named it as *Oedipus Complex*?

It is defined as "the repressed but continuing presence in the adult's unconscious of the male infant's desire to possess his mother and to have his rival, the father, out of the way."

Even the notion of this *complex* has been traced in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Hamlet's conflict is "an echo of a similar one in Shakespeare himself", as Jones proposes, and goes on to account for the "audience's powerful and continued response to

the play, over many centuries, as result of the repressed Oedipal conflict that is shared by all men.” Hamlet too cannot avenge *this* crime (of wreaking vengeance) as he is guilty of wanting to commit the *same crime* himself. He too has an *Oedipus Complex* – “a repressed sexual desire for his own mother, and a consequent wish to do away with his father. Thus, the uncle has merely done what Hamlet himself secretly *wished* to do: hence the difficulty for him of being the avenger.” This view of the play has been propounded by Sigmund Freud in his *Interpretations of Dreams* (1900). Freud sums up by drawing a satisfactory inference, that Hamlet is unable to “take vengeance on the man who did away with his father and took that father’s place with his mother, the man who shows him the repressed wishes of his own childhood realized. Thus the loathing which should drive him on to revenge is replaced in him by self-reproaches, by scruples of conscience, which remind him that he himself is literally no better than the sinner he is to punish.” “The psychoanalytic critic”, as Barry has pointed out, “points to the bedroom scene in which Hamlet shows an intense and unusual awareness of his mother’s sexuality.” Sigmund Freud links the situation of Hamlet in the play to that of Shakespeare himself –“It can, of course, only be the poet’s own mind which confronts us in *Hamlet*.” Similarly, “King Oedipus, who slew his father Laius and married his mother

Jocasta, merely shows us the fulfillment of our own childhood wishes.”

These are the austere and rigid interpretations laid by Sigmund Freud in his *The Interpretations of Dreams* and *The Oedipus Complex*. (essay).

I would like to deconstruct the banality of this norm *Oedipus Complex*. I desire to defend my protagonists Hamlet and Oedipus. The expatiated theory of *Oedipus Complex* is utter exacerbating and exasperating and in this very article I keenly wish to shun off this *complexity* by breaking the layer of the obscene jocular periphery.

Oedipus and Hamlet may be the victims of fate. Oedipus, for instance, failed to evitate the prophecy of ‘Delphic Oracle’ and there lies his fate, his misfortune! In *Hamlet*, as the play closes, the spectacle of a colossal ruin looms before us. Much blood has flown, gory acts have been committed, precious souls have been left to rot, wither and waste away. Revenge was the only ‘motif’ of Hamlet, a motive well-lost by virtue of much procrastination and indecisiveness. It is indeed a tragic spectacle bemoaning the loss of worthy souls. We grow alive to the sensibility of an unfathomable waste, a feeling emanating from a death of desires, wishes and will power, of the zest for life. It’s been very natural

for Hamlet, who loved his father so dearly, would like to avenge his father's death.

But he became feeble, infirm, enfeebled and debilitated in the verge of avenging his father's death. Why? Freud says he has an *Oedipus Complex*. And in this very context I would like to condemn his scurrilous theory. Stressing on the theories of *conscience* and *unconscience* is somehow amenable, but underlining the son's repressed sexual desire for his mother is absolutely obnoxious. Like Sidney I wish to say Freud's theories are "mouse eaten records", which is no doubt nonsensical and convey messages with no meaning. Everything can't be analyzed by the Freudian theories of consciousness and subconsciousness. It's nowhere written that Hamlet has a subconscious lust for his mother. There's no way a hint of it even. The notion of character is a 'myth' and 'illusion'. The concept of *self* cannot be understood by the unity of the *self* and thus the notion becomes flummoxing. It's perhaps true that 3/4th of a man's personality is unconscious and 1/4th is conscious. But that doesn't signify Hamlet has a repressed illicit sexual proneness and proclivity for his mother. How can one negotiate the fact of umbilical affection? It's the umbilical cord which carries all the love and tenderness and thereby creates a blissful liaison between the mother and son. Who knows that whether Hamlet is suffering from this umbilical

affection; and perhaps this umbilical affection constricts him momentarily from committing this gravely gory crime!

Let us now consider the case of King Oedipus.

“The fact that Oedipus performed both acts, the slaying of his father and the bedding of his mother, without suspecting the true relationships”, is in Freud’s view, “a deviation from the analytical subject matter which is easily intelligible and indeed inevitable.” Why should at all Oedipus suspect this true relationship? It is very natural for a king after ascending the throne possesses the queen automatically in a very normal process. Why should that man (Oedipus) have a repressed sexual desire for his mother, when he hadn’t seen her since his birth? It’s extremely illogical. He may have an intense desire for his mother –the motherly love! He may fumble for the “spring of (his) blood”; the very source of his blood but no way, he had a repressed lust. How can he ignore the umbilical love and emotion? Slaying off his father and that too unknowingly and having sex with his mother, as it has been termed by Freud as *Oedipus Complex* is preposterous, unreasonably absurd and perverted. Oedipus doesn’t even know who his mother was. He was just fulfilling his sexual desire with Jocasta and that was quite natural. Jocasta was his queen. One may say, that Oedipus may have lust for Merope (who was not his real mother). This above stated line is for those,

firm believer of Freud who wish to stick and adhere to the notion of *Oedipus Complex*. And the lust for Jocasta is absolutely normal. One shouldn't ignore this fact that, "Oedipus, son of Laius, King of Thebes and of Jocasta, was exposed as an infant because of the Delphic Oracle who had warned Laius that the still unborn child would be his father's murderer. " However, "the slaying of his father and the bedding of his mother", both these appalling crimes were committed unintentionally and inevitably in a "veritable attempt to thwart the veracity of oracles." His tragedy lies in this mere foul play of his destiny and fate. As he is destined to commit patricide and incest, he leaves Corinth immediately and set towards his original homeland of Thebes and encountered his "source of blood" –"biological father"- and in a fit of rage and wrath he murders him. And then he came to Thebes, rescued the people from the clutches of Sphinx by solving a mysterious riddle and naturally the Thebeans out of gratitude made him their King and gave him "Jocasta's hand in marriage"; and thus the "Delphic Oracle" proved true. Here lies his tragedy. He is innocent and devoid of guilt. On the contrary, he has played in the role of a savior.

So where lies this *complexity*? He didn't seem to know even Jocasta. His lust for Jocasta is not at all repressed, rather quite normal.

Oscar Wilde in his renowned essay *De Profundis* has remarked, "Suffering is one very long moment...It seems to circle around one centre of pain..." Similarly, Oedipus is about "pain...an obsession with pain...pain prolonged beyond all seeming endurance."

Oedipus' tragedy perhaps lies in his stubborn inquisitive desire to know the 'truth.' His quest for truth brings his tragic downfall- "till I have unraveled the mystery of my birth.../I cannot leave the truth unknown"; a decision which was going to prove fatal as an act of *peripetia*. Had he been not so inquisitive, then possibly he might have been rescued from encountering this deadly *nemesis*. But this was his destiny, his fate. He was the victim of fate. What has he done to deserve such a fate? What is Oedipus' *hamartia*? [*Hamartema* in Greek means not 'sin' or 'guilt' but literally, 'error'; erring in the dark world.]

From the philosophical premise, the story of Oedipus has a similarity with Friedrich Nietzsche's notion of *Amor Fati*. It is Oedipus' tryst with destiny and fate. Nietzsche says, "this world is the will to power and nothing besides!" Nietzsche's *Amor Fati* is an assertion of the fact that, "Everything is necessity...thus says the new knowledge; and this knowledge itself is necessity!" And Oedipus finally reckoned the original truth which brings his tragic downfall. What motivates Oedipus' action is his own nature- "Such being my nature, I cannot become something else, I cannot

give up the search into my origin, I'll know who I am." This is the biggest flaw of Oedipus. Laszlo Versenyi has rightly commented, "What he fulfills and saves, by not deviating from it, is his own nature. But that is also what destroys him, his own nature – *daimon*, fate...the need for self-knowledge. If so, "Know Thyself" is here no longer the pious, safe and sound precept of the 'Delphic Oracle' meaning "know your limit and stay within it", do not transgress nothing in excess. If all the action in the play is impelled by Oedipus' nature and if this nature can be expressed by the now transformed demand "Know Thyself", then it is this demand for self-knowledge which is the ultimate "tragic-flaw' that leads to Oedipus' mournful downfall. Irony is indeed a reality of life and it's been rightly showcased and underlined, "...the immortal image of Oedipus' unshrinking in the performance of a self-appointed task, unflinching in quest of the truth at whatever cost of terrible self-revelation."

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The tragic history of Doctor Faustus is perhaps the earliest literary work extant purporting to treat of the Wittenberg savant, errant scholar and conjuror- who had imbued himself in the occult philosophy during the age in which he lived. Though he has completely believed himself to be an impeccable person but the lust of knowledge for occult science and necromantic powers, dealing with the preternatural ambience sequestered him from the grace of God and ultimately encountered with the inevitable damnation or precisely the '*nemesis*'.

A very much fashionable fable has been portrayed by Christopher Marlowe who has brilliantly sketches a character selling his soul to Mephistopheles- the Devil for occult and necromantic powers. In designing such a character it's become quite obvious that Faustus is very much a Renaissance man- his ardent desire to reach the summit and more particularly his aspirations knew no bounds. The ultimate cessation of conjuration and exercising of necromantic powers and the rigorous incantation brings Faustus within the dark periphery, from where exemption is not feasible and labeled him as a

Renaissance man –a veritable tale which underlines how he succumbs to his own aspirations, dreams and illusions.

Undoubtedly, Faustus is a remarkable errant scholar who is also an Everyman and compels not only the Renaissance spectators but also the modern audiences to examine the intricate choices worth enough to discombobulate the psyche of humankind confronting a victim of intense desire, apprehension and doubt in a rapidly changing world. Yet we bore no sense of hatred towards him. There is no sense of detestation or abhorrence. We are sentient about his pitiable state and his tale successfully strikes the keynote of '*catharsis*'. Doctor Faustus emerges as a telling document of this dichotomy- this penchant for pursuing ends beyond the mortal touch and its inevitable recoiling effect, damnation and bottomless perdition.

Faustus is an artist but he is no way a sagacious person as he didn't wish to glorify God, just as his medieval predecessors did. Rather he ardently craved for occult power to applaud and please man. Renaissance hero was he typically, as his ultimate tragedy strikes as a consequence for possessing too much knowledge (the necromantic and occult philosophy). I find this aspect pretty intriguing as Francis Bacon has reckoned that 'Knowledge is power' in one of his literary essay and has mentioned, "*Nam et ipsa scientia potestas est*", but Faustus'

development as an 'empirical and skeptical thinker leaves no room for faith'. My question is if 'Knowledge is power' how can he face such a deserved death? And the answer lies in the vortex of his final committed sin- that is, the selling of his soul to the Devil for black arts and occult science. Faustus is indeed discomfited and thus raised a thought provoking question- "*Consummatum est*¹; *this bill is ended,/And Faustus hath bequeathed his soul to Lucifer./But what is this inscription on mine arm?/Homo, fuge!*² *Wither should I fly?/If unto God, he'll throw me down to hell./My senses are deceived;...*" [Act Two, scene one; L-73]. So from the above stated lines it is quite clear that Faustus is very much conscience of his sin and reckoned that there is no way of retribution. Once he sells his soul, there is no way of escapism, manumission and exemption even if he desires to. Faustus knows very well this veritable truth but suppressed this guilt ridden conscience and shoves himself in the world of darkness. "Like his mythical predecessors in the dim, Edenic past, he is fated to eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil and in doing so he reluctantly becomes the Devil's disciple and loses sight of the image of God in his soul."

¹ It is finished (Latin)

² Man, flee. (Latin)

Doctor Faustus is a tale about the loss of spirituality and certainly corporeality, an admonition of how it incurs danger and leads to damnation, not only in a conventional sense, but also about the inevitable fatality of desecration awaiting all Renaissance aspirations. This Renaissance man actually believes in the reality of Devil for he has learnt that man has no free will by which he can achieve salvation. The moral of this parable may seem orthodox, "What profits it a man if he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" [Book of Mathew]. Faustus may seem very much Promethean and Icarian, immolating himself to manumit man's aspirations from physical and earthly instrumentalities and "constricting superstitions" and beliefs. His damnation is not only the existential plight of a radical humanist rather he is secluded from God's grace and thus he needs to assert his own existence in this material world by affirming his own individuality. The *mélange* of Renaissance '*motif*' is widely seen here in its full ambivalence. Needless to say, that how occult powers appeals Faustus as it paves the path of exercising the intellectual activity and he can effascinate (to bewitch and charm) the human world. However, at the end he is betrayed. Douglas Cole in his essay *Doctor Faustus and the Morality Tradition*, raises a very much fundamental question- "Is Faustus truly representative of mankind, or even of a general class of men, as

the strict mortality hero always was? And is the conflict of good and evil, which Marlowe has certainly heightened in his departures from the Faust-Book, the characteristic conflict of the mortality?"

It's true that the Good Angel and the Bad Angel plays an active and vital role underneath Faustus' conscience and they dramatize his conflict of inner soul and thrust him in the jaws of jostling hostility. However, as he has willingly asunder himself from the God's grace, he thus decides to commune with the spirits and indulges himself in incantation- the ultimate occult science and philosophy, and takes an attempt to become God himself and was denied though. I no way deny the craft in which he has tinged himself into is quite a prehensile artifice, but this type of craft only leads to damnation and that has only happened to our hero. The course which he has opted from the very beginning is lunatic and it proves futile. Faustus sells his soul to the Devil and in return wants to live for twenty four years "in all voluptuousness," to have Mephistopheles attend and serve him sincerely only represents the Renaissance theme.

At the very beginning we have seen how the Good Angel urges him to lay aside the black arts of magic and occult philosophy. The Good Angel is undoubtedly the voice of God who tried to make Faustus read the scriptures and also counsels him to

read Bible. But Faustus' damnation is very much inevitable and incapable of being shunned. He is alone responsible for his own damnation- '*nemesis*.' His '*psychomachia*' is dramatized by both the Good and Evil Angels and Faustus on the other hand willingly received the magicians, Cornelius and Valdes. Faustus ignored the voice of the Good Angel (may be externalization of Faustus' conscience) and paid heed to the words of the Evil Angel, the emissary of Lucifer. The Evil Angel insisted him to usurp the occult power, "Go forward Faustus, in that famous art.../Be thou on earth as Jove is in the sky,/ Lord and commander of these elements." [Act One, scene one; L-72]. And Faustus in a elated tone answers, "How am I glutted with conceit of this!/Shall I make spirits fetch me what I please,/Resolve me if all ambiguities...." [Act One, scene one; L-76]. It's clearly evident that Faustus is truly responsible for his own damnation and I believe Faustus' was guided by Mephistopheles as the decision was God's. He intensely desires Faustus to suffer and thus throws him in the visage of violent pain and agony.

Why God has done this to him? It's because he has willingly delved into the world of darkness. His venture with the occult philosophy and black magic is thus characterized by the eagerness and covet to escape the norms and codes of this concentric circle of mundane ambience and as a result his root

has been cut off from the society! Doctor Faustus embodying true Renaissance theme (and '*motif*' as well) dreams of gaining preternatural occult powers by which he can perform miracles – transcending the ordinary laws by which the universe is governed and wish to cast an enchanting spell on the entire mankind. Art is too a kind of magic which can metamorphose the whole world and is capable of changing the entire scenario and the liaison between art and occult philosophy is brilliantly dramatized by Marlowe. It is often said that Faustus is a Protestant and a Lutheran by training, 'who has attempted through the Reformation to escape the evils he associates with the Roman Catholic Church, only to become obsessed with the pervasive evil he sees in man's nature- an inability to avoid sin, an inborn depravity that makes damnation inescapable.'

The lust for occult science and philosophy, necromantic powers and dark knowledge makes Faustus a true Renaissance figure, a scientist and philosopher who aspires to make human being more godlike and thereby defying God's grace and renouncing moral principles indulges in profanity, sells his soul to Mephistopheles for his final venture to the dark gloomy envious world in a hope of evincing mortality and as a result succumbs in seclusion. There was no chance of redemption for he was doomed. The seizing of the powers of God- authorizing and the

arbitrary assumption and exercising awful power is no doubt a mortal 'sin' (as we are aware of the phrase: 'The reward of sin is death') which was the root cause of his ultimate damnation and he thus fails to escape his '*nemesis*.'

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Shakespeare's tragedies are widely acclaimed as an index of the human mind and the unexplored recesses of the human psyche. At the same time, there has surfaced a spate of questions, regarding the ambience or the atmosphere, especially the ubiquity of supernaturalism, necromancy and evil premonitions in majority of his plays. Putting aside the comedies in which the supernatural is based limited to dreams and fantasies, tragedies like *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, *King Lear* and even *Julius Caesar* betray a strong presence of supernatural machinery. The supernatural, necromancy or the evil portents plays a crowning role in Shakespearean plays and it has diverse manifestations. Shakespeare was very much a man of his times and could feel the pulse of the ideas and conventions at play in the Elizabethan England. Witchcraft, necromancy and supernatural agencies wafted the public mind and Shakespeare drew upon their contrivances in his different plays. What is however noteworthy about Shakespeare's use of such machinery is that he subjected the same to the thematic and dramatic import of his plays. It is

indeed intriguing that such machinery cannot be considered outside the dramatic circle of the thematic 'motif' of any such play. It is very much a dramatic ploy, a structural *tour de force* which is part and parcel of the dramatic fabric. In *Macbeth* and precisely in *Hamlet*, the supernatural plays more than anywhere else, a major role directly or indirectly, actively or passively, in influencing the idiom of actions.

It is worth emphasizing the 'normality' of witchcraft beliefs. "Although witchcraft accusations reached epidemic proportions in the 16th and 17th century Europe, witchcraft beliefs are endemic in many societies"(Peter StallyBrass). An adequate explanation of witchcraft and necromancy needs to have a double focus, and it must showcase the actual beliefs and narrate how they fit within a particular cosmology. However, the English Government had, "at least since 1300, been concerned with 'witches' - with sorcerers as they might attempt to kill the king with prophets, because they might forecast the hour of this death" (Peter StallyBrass).

Shakespeare was not unaware many of the customs, beliefs and taboos, rife in the Elizabethan times. "A deep seated belief in witchcraft, necromancy and heraldry not only prevailed amongst the common citizens and Elizabethan groundlings, but also amongst the gentry and nobility -a majority of whom formed

the queen's court"(Alan SinField). Needless to mention again, that during the Elizabethan period, the people of England austere believed in witches, ghosts, fairies, elf, prophecies, dreams and even in palmistry and astrology. The supernatural environs all these phenomena which cannot be explained by the laws of nature. The ancient poets believed in pagan gods, but with the development of the Christian religion, the poets are restricted to the world of tradition, folk-lore and superstition.

Shakespeare's attitude towards the supernatural and necromancy can be viewed with the various stages of his life. In his youth, he regarded the supernatural agencies as the most astonishing creatures and labeled them as "evil portents" who are the root causes of a man's forthcoming peril. They are the greatest equivocators and dupe human beings with acute dexterity. He has actively used these machineries by borrowing the ideas from the Greek mythology and draped them accordingly in the colour of his own imagination just as his dramatic expediency demanded.

However, Shakespeare has also used much of these machineries in *A Midsummer's Night Dream* where the fairies and spirits play an effervescent role meant for entertaining the readers and audiences. Even Prospero in *The Tempest* possesses many necromantic powers but he does not contrive any plan of

taking revenge on his banisher. Ariel, the jovial spirit in *The Tempest* represents the finer spirit of the air, while Caliban represents the grosser elements of the earth. One can compare Ariel with Caliban by quoting Coleridge, "*Nothing was ever more finely conceived than this contrast between the material and the spiritual, the gross and the delicate.*"

It is striking that Shakespeare maintains an austere mark of distinction between the supernatural creatures and the human characters in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, as he believes that the supernatural world is governed by quite different laws than those govern the natural world. The treatment of the supernatural in *Hamlet* foreshadows the gloom of *Macbeth*. He has used the ghost in *Hamlet* as a terrifying and horrifying agent, and has clothed it in a manner which is peculiar to the Elizabethan Age of superstitions and beliefs. He makes the ghost 'real' to give an effect to the play to platter the dramatic purpose. Ghosts and spirits during Shakespearean time used to appear just before some great human catastrophe in order to give a warning or to indicate some motive of revenge or the process of retribution for wrongs done to some innocuous souls. The ghost of Hamlet's father appears before the son in order to inform him about the true murderer of his father and also to instigate him further to take revenge upon the murderer.

Needless to say, I wish to delve into the veils of Shakespearean plays to unveil the rancorous and malice world created by him. Virulence, malignity and especially animosity strike the keynote of his acclaimed tragedies. The word 'animosity' has two innuendos. First, it reflects mere spiritedness, courage or resoluteness and secondly, violent hatred leading to active opposition which may sometimes give birth to unnatural malicious crimes. Let us now try to explore some facts of the aforementioned lines.

The conventions of Elizabethan revenge tragedy were well established, drawn initially from the Senecan model of revenge where its action is typically centered upon a leading character's attempt to avenge the murder of a loved one, sometimes at the prompting of the victim's ghost. It involves complex intrigues and disguises, the quest for vengeance, insanity, sensational incidents and usually some exploration of the morality of revenge. Drawing partly on precedents of 'Senecan' tragedy the English revenge tragedy is far more blood thirsty in its explicit presentation of premeditated violence. Thomas Kyd established this form of revenge tragedy with his renowned *Spanish Tragedy* and Shakespeare perfected the genre with *Hamlet* which reflects jealousy, violence, incest, murder and horror. However, unlike an average revenge play, the revenge *motif* in *Hamlet* is subservient to the psychological interplay of passions and a suppressing

almost morbid, libidinal force, that wants to break cover, but hesitates to emerge. The revenge devices are Shakespeare's dramatic ploy to plumb the depth of the psychological recesses of the protagonist. In the very beginning, he sets up the scene, having a ghost on a dark night. The real 'dramatic tension' of the play begins as soon as the ghost of the late king tells Hamlet about his murder- *"A serpent stung me- so the whole ear of Denmark / Is by a forged process of my death.../ The serpent that did sting thy father's life / Now wears his crown."* The ghost also motivates and instigates Hamlet to take the revenge of his death- *"Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder!"* The ghost also directs Hamlet to kill his mother, the root cause of all this heinous and rancorous crime- *"Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive against thy mother aught: leave her to heaven."* And as the play ends, the spectacle of a colossal ruin looms before us. The supernatural machinery and evil omens pervades the play and it has been clearly showcased that much blood has flown, gory acts have been committed, precious souls have been left to rot, wither and waste away! Revenge was Hamlet's motive, a motive well-lost by virtue of much procrastination and indecisiveness. In the end, all the people that matter fall, as happens in a revenge play. But in Hamlet, we grow alive to the sensibility of an unfathomable waste, a feeling emanating from a death of desires, wishes and

will power of the zest for life. It is a tragic spectacle bemoaning the loss of worthy souls.

A great Shakespearean tragedy is not merely a dramatic presentation of well-crafted situations and conflicts, nor is it the projection of a character at the crossroads of life's anomalies. It works on the psychic level by employing atmosphere as a dramatic *tour de force* to reveal a character inside out. The "Sleep-Walking Scene" in *Macbeth* is remarkable not because it rips open the recesses of Lady Macbeth's innermost core, but also because it throws into relief the suppressed feelings of compunction and guilt arising from a state of psychic neurosis break cover and create a pivotal point in the texture of the necromantic play.

The woman who had said that a little water would clean her and her husband of the deed of murder, now says, "*What, will these hands never be clean?*" and "*All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand.*" At a glance, this scene showcases the mental collapse of Lady Macbeth and demonstrates that evil has in it the seeds of self destruction. This contradiction reveals the conflict raging all the time within lady Macbeth which she has suppressed under her tremendous will power. It makes a very interesting case in point. All the contradictions which we perceive in this situation, appears to emanate from her inherent guilt

complex, her suppression of the guilt which she has performed for the sake of Macbeth. It reflects an agitated state of mind in the throes of psycho-neurotic claustrophobia. The apostrophe to darkness is steeped in irony that darkness is invoked to shroud a dark deed, and a taper is made to burn as it were to her some amount of comfort. The process is one of inversion, in which darkness of the exterior universe gets pinned to darkness of the psychic nature from which Lady Macbeth now tries to escape. But she is already in a mesh, once she wants to "*cut it here, it grows there.*" This is akin to a state of *schizophrenia* in which the deranged self falls back upon itself and exposes in a flash all its fissures.

In Shakespeare's women there is no conflict of impulses, no mixture of motives, which lead to the complexity of character, and, therefore, they are mostly either good or bad. In *King Lear*, the characters of Goneril and Regan are very simple. They are wicked to the core from the outset and with all their evil designs, they are in the strangle hold of their own jealousy, malice and hypocrisy. Women by nature are instinctive and Shakespeare also has depicted them as such. Even Cleopatra, Portia and others are not very much under the domination of their will. Their courage also falls, their heart breaks, when the moment comes for screwing it up to the sticking place.

Finally, I would like to underline the "Banquet Scene" in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* which is endowed with the supernatural elements. The ghost in this scene is entirely subjective, and thus, a symbolic representation of the terror psychosis eating into the vitals of Macbeth. In psychoanalysis, especially in the Freudian lines, a sense of guilt combined with a fears of retributive justice, often creates what is called *neurosis*. So when the time comes, when the feelings of guilt reach their limits they break cover and create a huge disequilibrium in the persona. Macbeth's hallucination interpreted in these lines is not simply a byproduct of his imagination but is also a reflection of his guilt ridden conscience. Banquo's ghost is an infernal illusion created out of air by demonic forces and since nobody but Macbeth can see the ghost of Banquo, the dramatist's intention is clear. The ghost is a subjective apparition, not an objective reality, as we are aware of the subjective ghost is seen only by on who suffers from mental distraction and so does Macbeth as he has murdered Banquo. Similarly, in *Hamlet*, the ghost of Hamlet's father is objective and it does not appear as the result of anybody's guilt consciousness, although it should have appeared before Gertrude and Claudius as they are truly guilty and are responsible for the murder. In *Julius Caesar*, the ghost is again subjective and appears only before Brutus, who is one of the leading conspirators and

assassins of Caesar. Now, Macbeth cannot be simply termed an exploration into the world of evil, it also thrives on situational and contrapuntal irony which shows how a man of genuine attributes disposed towards evil, succumbs into it so much that he has his paroxysms of psychic fright. The "Banquet Scene" is a tell-tale of such fright. The irony however lies there as light shines over the assembled guests but what Macbeth sees is a vision of darkness. The entire ambience is charged with an element of tension and suspense, underpinned by an area of deep darkness. Underneath the ceremonious attitude of Macbeth lies the deep dark subconscious which threatens to break cover at every possible instance making the garish convivial ambience a veritable hell.

Thus the supernatural machinery, necromancy, evil premonitions, animosity, malignity, virulence and the subconscious (often guilt ridden mind) contributed to the most of Shakespearean plays. Its consequences may vary but the machineries enriches the textures of the plays and uplifts the tragedy to a cosmic dimension and showcases that man's actions (might be evil) aren't isolated but closely related to various forms operating in this universe.

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4

Demolishing Clichés: Cross-Dressing and Gender Ambiguity in Shakespeare

Shakespeare's greatness as a dramatist consists in his introspective study of human soul, his ability to see through the veneer into the core of reality. Shakespeare's comedies might appear light and flippant against the realistic comedies of Ben Jonson, but the *art* of Shakespeare lies in concealing art. The device of disguise and cross-dressing, which forms an integral and inextricable part of *As You Like It*, *Merchant of Venice* and *Twelfth Night (What You Will)* is not simply a ploy to attract the attention of the Elizabethan commoners and groundlings rather it is an Italianesque *tour de force* to make subtle shades of irony as well as situational humour. In *Twelfth Night*, especially, Shakespeare's use of the device works on several levels. Apart from the points raised earlier, it throws into relief complex psychological issues about sexuality and empathetic realization. I'll try to address the point precisely during the course of our discussion.

To make the heroine along with the other female characters of a play appear male-like by assuming the masculine

attires was a common and favourite effect of the Elizabethan stage during Shakespearean times. However, Shakespeare didn't make an error of portraying the characters –the disguised boys– appear overtly masculine. The disguise of the heroine as a young effervescent man, though in *Twelfth Night* it is adopted from the particular story-tradition culminating in *Apolonius and Silla*, was already an established ingredient of Shakespearean comedy. In the *Two Gentleman of Verona*, Julia enters her lover Proteus' service as a 'page' (servant); in *The Merchant of Venice*, Portia plays in the role of a young judicious discerning lawyer to outwit the Jew Shylock; Rosalind lives in the forests of Arden as a shepherd youth in *As You Like It*. So we can very well see that how Shakespeare is indeed fond of these machineries, but in dramatizing them, he has exploited the dramatic irony of the situations.

Disguise is a form of 'illusion'. It makes people to be one thing, while in reality, they are another. On the Elizabethan stage, Viola (*Twelfth Night*) would have been played by a boy actor as there were no women actors on the public stage until the Restoration in 1660. The Puritans were in their "stinging criticism of swearing, drunkenness and fornication." They have improbated the maypole dancing, gambling and the cross-dressing boys who enacted the feminine roles, claimed that this practice provokes

illicit sexual desires in audiences. It's true that a man will always be reckoned as a man rather than a "biological specimen in possession of a certain configuration of organs". In a society like Elizabethan England, it's a universal approved ideology which underlines the superiority of the male and inferiority of the female and thus wrapping up in male attires could be rather challenging to the entire male authorities. Even Portia or Viola's disguise examines the precincts of gender and its roles. Our own visual images of men dressed as women may be misleading and misleading in trying to imagine the effects of this dramatic convention. It is a grimace and is often thought that these young boy actors must have been exceedingly convincing as women while enacting the roles but needless to say, we are pretty much aware that underneath this feminine role there exists a prominent male body. Shakespeare should have been probed into this solemn fact and check the flummoxing situation it engenders rather than ignoring the physical attributes and facts.

Moreover, I would like to highlight few other intriguing points encompassing this thematic issue of cross-dressing and disguise.

It is an approved fact that during the Elizabethan times women are not allowed to invade and enact upon the stage and

the boy actors used to play in the roles of women in a convincing manner without paying much heed to the physical attributes. But Shakespeare, while writing the plays, suppressed these notions of physical appearances and presented before us the eristic personalities like Portia and Viola precisely. How can he deny the universal truth of their physical masculine appearance –the certain “configuration of organs”! Viola assuming the male attire plays a significant role in *Twelfth Night*, but the disguise which she has undertaken to conceal her real identity raises one fundamental question. How could she have concealed her essential feminine organs? The case is again aptly same in *The Merchant of Venice* where Portia played a crucial role of lawyer to save Bassanio’s friend Antonio from the malicious clutches of the Jew Shylock. How does Portia conceal her female sex and organs? How could Shakespeare have completely ignored this essential notion of femininity? Eviscerating the feminine organs from the body in order to covet oneself in order to accomplish some purpose seems absurd. None can disregard this wrangling aspect. But Shakespeare has completely exploited the norms of these traits and goes on to expatiate his ideas firmly.

Confusion of cross-dressing and disguise has given a chance to the feminist critics to unveil the serious flaws committed by Shakespeare. And I must say before quoting them,

the flaws they have figured out is apt and worth enough to illuminate and showcase. They have solemnly discussed and pondered whether his use of “cross-dressed heroines within the context of all-male acting companies is ultimately conservatives or radical in its attitude to gender roles. Does Viola’s intimacy with Orsino gained through her disguise suggest that the conventions about courtship are foolish restriction or does the fact that she uses her disguise as man to pursue romance –the ‘feminine’ sphere- rather than something more challenging to masculine authority actually reinforce gender conventions.” Nevertheless, it’s true that the disguise and cross-dressing can be read to suggest that women’s roles are “over circumscribed by gender convention and that genuine affection cannot flourish in such artificial confines.”

Thus, I can draw my inference by saying that cross-dressing, disguise and gender ambiguity tend to raise few significant intriguing eristic queer issues of sexual politics, gender fabrication and gender erection.

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The ideological and historical archives that are copiously showcased in the novel *Cien años de soledad* (***One Hundred Years of Solitude***) are confined neither to the fictional world of Macondo nor circumscribed to the sphere of politics environing Colombia as they impel forcibly on the "raw nerve of insurrection" -a response to the economic domination by North American interests and the eager desire infested with savageness and inhumanity of Latin American governments and their military forces. However, the usage of historical data and archives in a text being platter with brimming issues and at the same time steeped in exaggeration or hyperboles along with the figurative innuendos has intrigued many critics. Myth, magic and timelessness are closely related with the counterfeiting of reality by ordaining and ratifying culture that leads Latin Americans to interiorize an essentially unreal cult of their own history and identity. The issues at stake in the studies of this intriguing cases (history, myth, magic and timelessness) goes far beyond examining the historical validity and any attempt to pin down the genre of *Cien años de*

soledad thus entails an irresistible alluring literary exercise. It undoubtedly tends to problematize many of its themes, which threatens to range beyond the rigid norms and notions of the postmodern superstructure.

Before I underline any sort of phenomenological aspects, it will be perhaps worthwhile to have a glance into the earliest novels penned down by Marquez before *soledad*. Marquez started his work on ***Leaf Storm*** (*La hojarasca*) before 1950, followed by ***No One Writes to the Colonel*** (*El coronel no tiene quien le escriba*, 1958) and ***In Evil Hour*** (*La Mala Hora*)- the three novels which were penned down over a period spanning almost a decade depicting myriad influences and styles that "resist reduction to a single type." ***One Hundred Years of Solitude*** is undoubtedly a work of fiction. The rise of the Latin American New Novel from 1940s and 50s onwards and finally to be on its meridian in the so-called Boom of the 1960s was closely confederated underneath the psyche of numerous observers and critics with a "reaction against traditional realism based on an assumption that reality was observable, understandable and translatable into literature." So, thus, it's quite obvious to accept *soledad* as a product of that period. Writing in the so-called postmodern era, Marquez brought about a disparate coalescence of motifs which make *soledad* a one-off novel even today after

the sudden demise of the author. The setting redolent vehemently of a 'structure' being embedded with naturalistic themes of grim reality and fantasy or optimism and despair, of appearance and illusion, of experience and dream, emptiness or death, myth and history, the chronicle becomes the hotbed of psychological interactions, morbid passions and complexities presaging the 'post' post-modern era.

Of the myriad aspects in *soledad* (history, myth, metafiction, ideology, politics, women, solitude, apocalypse, incest or language and many such others) I would like to explore effervescently the interplay of magical and social realism -an intriguing point which narrates in a semi-realistic and semi-fantastic way the history of the village Macondo (an imaginary town) and of a leading family in it, the Buendías. Aureliano finds a book which describes Macondo and the very novel unfolds the enigma of Melquíades' manuscripts. José Arcadia Buendía, inviting his offspring to decipher the fictional adventure. It is the last member of the Buendía family who deciphers the impervious manuscripts and discovers that the manuscripts and the novel are absolutely same and one that constructs its own reality; and he is therefore no more a fictional character who only exists in Melquíades' narrative. As a metafiction it certainly challenges the representation of the 'real' world. The world exists on the level of

discourse. As Robert Alter states, "in reflexive fiction the reader must contemplate simultaneously the frame and what is represented inside the frame." *One Hundred Years of Solitude* presents "a world neither of hard fact nor of embraced superstition, but a world where the imaginary and the figurative are seriously entertained and not visibly discriminated against." As best exemplified by *soledad*, Marquez's "ingenious mixture of realism and fantasy has resulted in the creation of a total fictional universe in which the commonplace takes on an aura of magic and the impossible is made believable." The insinuating of fantasy is perfectly well received and it adopts the style of a magic realism text. The notion of Magic Realism (*el realismo magical*) is a term first coined by Cuban novelist Alejo Carpentier in 1949. The original notion of *lo real maravilloso* (the marvellous real) was based on this idea of "rediscovering Latin American reality, and, in an echo of Carpentier, Garcia Marquez has commented that his encounter with the larger-than-life world of Colombia's Caribbean region taught him to perceive reality in a new way, in which the fantastic was part of everyday life." Marquez has himself mentioned, "...everyday life in Latin America shows us that reality is full of extraordinary things." And at the same time, it is also been used by the European critics to describe a similar trend in postwar German fiction exemplified novels like Gunter Grass' *The*

Tin Drum (1959). However, Marquez, through the arsenal of magic realism portrays his dealings with war, strife, suffering or death in the mid 1960s of Colombia which had witnessed numerous 'politically motivated deaths.' His magical flair is to create a fusion of fantasy with reality by introducing the reader his Colombia where myths, portents and legends exist with technology and modernity. Marquez skillfully blends the historical and psychological realism with surreal flights of fancy.

Let us now revisit few examples of magic realism from the novel.

Rebeca upon the retreat of Arcadio falls ill with the vile disease. Equally magical and psychologically realistic is the moment when José Arcadio is shot- "A trickle of blood came out under the door, crossed the living room, went out into the street, continued on in a straight line across the uneven terraces, went down steps and climbed over curbs..." Even an umbilical cord connects a child to its mother not only before birth, rather throughout the life, and possibly even after death has been wonderfully portrayed by Marquez. The unity between Ursula and Arcadio is so effectively firm that the smell of gunpowder never fades away from the corpse, not even after he is placed "hermetically" in a "special coffin". The instances of magic realism can be traced with the death of Arcadio, "a light rain of yellow

flowers falls all through the night in a silent storm...the streets were carpeted with a compact cushion..." Through this infusion of magic Marquez pays tribute to this valiant figure, the founder of the community. ***One Hundred Years of Solitude*** brings in periphery social realism and magic realism ensemble. His novel reflects reality with different backgrounds and situations. His text is indeed a magical insight into reality and can be read as a sort of "alternative attitude". There are euro-centric viewpoint which peeps into reality and very much self-reflexive in nature and creates a world of its own. "Ideological strategy", a critic opines whereas the Marxist believes it's an "escapist strategy." These multiple perspectives are especially appropriate to the unique reality of Latin America- entangled between modernity and pre-industrialization and lacerated by civil war; plundered by imperialism where the experiences of the people may vary much more than in a homogenous society. Rushdie thus opines that *soledad* is a "self-referencial closed system"; Macondo exists and that is its magic precisely to say. Critics have read ***One Hundred Years of Solitude*** as a "cultural document, revolutionary narrative and as a high point of early postmodernism." Through the notion of *el realismo magical* Marquez successfully conveys a reality that embodies magic, superstition, religion, history and varied myths which are unquestionably infused into the modern world. The

novel breaks with the "structural impenetrability typical of the New Novel and marks a turn to accessible and readable narrative. It is a supreme fiction, achieves that status as it reformulates early modern narratives of self-discovery and dominion."

Dean J. Irvine in his essay *Fables of the Plague Years: Postcolonialism, Postmodernism and Magic Realism* in *Cien años de soledad (One Hundred Years of Solitude)* points out few intriguing and as well as queer issues. He has mentioned in this essay, "The model of magic realism under construction here is a double-helix: postcolonialism as one genetic strand, postmodernism as the other. In this model, magic realism and the magic realist text are collocated in the twists and gaps of this double discourse, that is, the discursive of enchainment of postcolonialism and postmodernism." Franz Roh in his essay *Nach-Expressionismus: Magischer Realismus. Probleme der neuesten europaischen* (1925) opines, "Like postmodernism and postcolonialism, magic realism is recognized as historical product of the discourses of modernism and colonialism." And it's an accepted fact that among the commentators on magic realism, this German art critic coined the term in 1925 in reference to 'post-expressionist visual art.' However, D'haen's conception of magic realism is nothing but a 'postmodernist discourse' whereas Slemon argues that magic realism as a postcolonial discourse

performs 'a socially symbolic act' -the historical social fact, massacre of the banana workers (chapter 15) or the founding of Macondo echoes the chronicles of the 'discovery' and colonisation of the 'New World' and certainly the 'plague of forgetfulness' and the loss of historical memory. This insomniac plague also underlines the context of postmodernist metafiction: "Those who wanted sleep, not from fatigue but because of the nostalgia for dreams, tried all kinds of methods of exhausting themselves", and a magic realist strain of postmodernism- "incredulity towards metanarratives", according to the view of Lyotard. The evidence of insomnia plague and the magic realist narrative of "the banana plague" (*la peste del banano*) showcases the "sociohistorical epidemic of neocolonial imperialism." It's quite obvious that like postmodernism, magic realism is subject to colonial imperatives. Janes mentions, "Latin American reality is colonized by the term." Amaryll Chanady on the other hand posits a view of another dimension. He says that the portrayal of a exceedingly preternatural innate world-view, precisely magic, fused with the portraiture of contemporary political and social perplexions, precisely realism, and the cognizance of Latin America as 'exotic', marked with scepticism, and the representation of an archival Latin America. "Magic realism is often defined as the juxtaposition of two different rationalities- the Indian and the European in a

syncretic fictitious world-view based on the simultaneous existence of several entirely cultures in Latin America", he further expatiated.

Magic realism is a narrative style which blurs the "traditional realist distinction between fantasy and reality." It is undoubtedly a "distortion" which "stumbles on truth" (Michael Wood). Marquez successfully weaves, without exploiting the notion of *el realismo*, that is worth enough to enravish us like the other enrapturing myths. The ending or the final annihilation of Macondo and the Buendías and the ultimate decipher of Melquíades' manuscripts might have been bruised and distorted the Latin American reality but the later generations will accept them as truth. "The city of mirrors (*espejos*) that Jose Arcadio Buendia had dreamt of founding in Macondo turns out to be no more than a city of mirages (*espejismos*)." [p.336]. However, some Marxist critics rigorously objected to the total destruction of Macondo in which even the workers are disappeared and considered it as a "radical pessimism."

In spite of all this distortions and contortions, *Cien años de soledad* is perhaps the greatest and renowned of the myriad Latin American fables, as Martin points out, that it is not because of the alluring telltale of the Buendías, rather, it is a "metaphor for the history (archives and myths) of the continent since

Independence" and a narrative about the myths of Latin American history and reality.

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“When Gregor Samsa awoke one morning from troubled dreams, he found himself changed into a monstrous cockroach in his bed.” A man transforming into a cockroach leaves us flabbergasted and flummoxed, but that what has exactly happened in Franz Kafka’s short story *Metamorphosis*. Let us consider the case of Béranger in Eugène Ionesco’s *Rhinocéros*. Absurdity and purposelessness framed the play, which is a strange exploration of a single man’s transformation from apathy to responsibility –the responsibility of saving the entire society which is gradually succumbing to the dark sombre ambience. Yes, sombre pallid palpable obscure and wan scenario has been showcased from the beginning of the play quite discreetly. The protagonist, precisely the hero, who didn’t give up till the end, struggles and strives hard to remain ‘The Last Human Being’ when the entire lot has completely metamorphosed into ferocious creatures. He says actively, “I’ll put up a fight against them, the whole lot of them! I’m the last man left and I’m staying that way until the end. I’m not capitulating!” And the curtain drops. His resolute and firm

attitude deserve accolades, he didn't yield and perished to the throng of the insensitive insentient people. His fellow mates Daisy, Botard, Dudard and even Jean, close friends of Bérenger, easily and willingly transformed themselves into rhinoceros(es)!

Certainly the question arises, why they are transforming themselves into animals and mere insects? It is sheer lunacy, meaningless and absurd. How can a man transform into an insect or an animal?

But what is this absurd and absurdity? Does it have no meaning? Artificial or superfluous reality created by the playwrights? Being steeped in symbolism? Any sort of innuendo?

Let us explore.

'*Absurdism*', one of the most exuberant and enigmatic creative movements in the modern theatre, is a term applied to a particular type of realist drama which captured, captivated and even arrested the theatre aficionados and critics for the past four decades. One specific area, appropriately labeled as '*The Theatre of the Absurd*', by the American critic Martin Esslin in the 1960s offers its audience and spectators an existentialist point of view of the outside world and forces them to consider the meaning of their existence in a world where there appears to be no true order and meaning. Absurd is that which, Esslin states, in *The Theatre of the Absurd*, is "devoid of purpose...cut off from his religious,

metaphysical and transcendental roots, man is lost; all his actions become senseless, absurd, useless..." Apparently they seem absurd but if we fumble for the true and inner meaning, we realize that underneath of those symbols lies the harsh unendurable perplexing reality and this left us dumb.

What I mean to say in this article is that we the individual asserting our own existence by perishing into absolute desecration and transforming ourselves so easily in lieu of some benefits. Aren't we are in the position of Jean, Botard or Daisy who suffering from the epidemic called '*rhinoceritis*'? Certainly again one gets inclined to know what '*rhinoceritis*' is. It is a disease of the totalitarians of the Right as well as of the Left. Where will the innocuous mass go? Either they will survive by transforming themselves or be 'The Last Man' alike B renger where the curtain of their life drops as the postmodernists believe, "where the curtain drops, the drama begins." Nobody dares to know what is happening behind the curtain, but all the actions takes place and brushes off those, who flouted the orders and violated the norms –the strict codes of society. "Finished, it's finished, nearly finished, it must be nearly finished", Clov promises himself at the beginning of Samuel Beckett's *Endgame*. Steven Connor in his *Introduction to Postmodernism* says, "the first thing to be said about postmodernism, at this hour, after

three decades of furious business and ringing tills, is that it must be nearly at an end. But in chess, from which Beckett's play takes its title, the endgame is not the end of the game", but the very beginning of the game. We don't know what has happened to Bérenger as the curtain drops. We still wonder how will he confront and encounter the entire throng of the less sensitive people? Postmodernists celebrates the 'loss', 'skepticism', 'anxiety' and 'uncertainty'. One who dares to flout the orders and can't be tempted easily, becomes the 'Hero' of the society which illuminates his courageous appeal, flamboyance and his resoluteness no way encourages illegal and unjust activities. The concept of 'justice' has diverse connotations. The corrupted world too seeks justice which only ushers darkness. But Bérenger seeks sanctioned justice for the entire society. Saying 'NO' to the entire system demands firm courage, valor and boldness. Today there is a crisis of conceptualization alike 'rhinoceros', while the political realities of ideologies and totalitarianism are defined in absolute terms of metaphysical evil. As Ionesco says, "Everything seems a shadow". The current scenario of today's society resembles the same situation alike Ionesco's play *Rhinocéros* where metaphysical anguish is expressed through dislocated identity. Everyone is suffering from identity-crisis. "*Que sais je*"? (What do I know) aptly suits them. They neither know anything, nor even

agog to learn something! They are no way reckoning the fact that why they are transforming, but actively taking part in the process of 'metamorphosis' sans any hesitation. The ambience firmly need dexterous manoeuvre where an active movement can resuscitate the conscience of the unconscious soul.

The play *Rhinocéros* where this totalitarian theory drools is applicable in today's society. The play is supposedly based on Ionesco's experience of the rapid spread and propagation of Nazism but the epidemic '*rhinocerotitis*' is represented here in the figurative or symbolic terms of "being the epidemic of the right-wing totalitarianism as well as the left-wing conformism." It has been said that *Rhinocéros* represents Ionesco's feelings before he left Romania in 1938, when more and more of his acquaintances adhered to the Fascist movement –"People allow themselves to be invaded by a new religion, a doctrine, a fanaticism. At such movements we witness a veritable mental mutation...one has the impression of being confronted with monster rhinos, for example. They have the mixture of candour and ferocity. They would kill you with the best possible consciences." The case is so relevant in today's West Bengal, the entire scenario of the political field showcased and underlined that there is no such a 'last man left' alike Bérenger, who can resuscitate the conscience of a rare individual and takes an active firm attempt to straighten the

aberrations of contorted history, to make his truth transcend reality.

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"This was woman herself, with her sudden fears, her irrational whims, her instinctive woman, her impetuous boldness, her fussings and her delicious sensibility." The readers must be wondering who the author of the above stated lines is, or from where the above lines have been taken? Who is the woman? Many such questions tend to come up and that is quite obvious.

If I reveal that the author is no more, then one feels more and more inclined to know the identity of the man. Let it be known that the author did not conceal himself in a shroud of anonymity and he seems to have a profound association with the word 'identity' as we shall see in course of our discussion. After the aforementioned lines were published he was dead and yet he lived. Indeed my readers must be confused.

Yes, it is indeed quite queer.

It is a theory which has been disseminated by the renowned daring French theorist Roland Barthes in his contradictory and controversial essay *Death of the Author* where he flouts all the conventional idea that the "author is the origin of

the text, the source of its meaning and the only authority for interpretation.” Barthes came into prominence in the 1960s and 70s and was highly influenced by Jean Paul Sartre and Marcel Proust but went far beyond them in presenting himself as a “notorious iconoclast” who reversed traditionalist assumptions. In this particular essay called *The Death of the Author* he tries to analyze the different roles for both the author and the reader. He is undoubtedly one of those significant links in the chain of postmodernist criticism that showcases the absurdity of seeking to discover the innuendos and meaning in literary texts because such a meaning is ever-elusive and posit a dispassionate and impersonal role for the writer. The new critics believed that the unity of the text lay not in its author’s intention but in its structure. Peter Brooker has rightly pointed out, “this self-contained unity, nevertheless, has subterranean connections with its author, because in their view, it represents a complex verbal enactment corresponding to the author’s intuitions about the world. Barthes’ formula is utterly radical in its dismissal of such humanistic notions. His author is stripped of all metaphysical status and reduced to a location where language, that infinite storehouse of citations, repetitions, echoes and references, crosses and re-crosses.” He means to say that the reader can ignore the author’s intention and are absolutely free to enter the

text from any direction. The death of the author is inwrought and innate in “Structuralism”, which treats “individual utterances as the products of impersonal system.”

And in this very context, where he has mentioned that the author is dead, I would like to propose my own assessment.

Let us revisit the introductory lines of Barthes’ essay, *The Death of the Author*. In his story *Sarrasine* Balzac, describing a castrato disguised as a woman, he writes the following sentences- “this was woman herself, with her sudden fears, her irrational whims, her instinctive woman, her impetuous boldness, her fussings and her delicious sensibility.” Let me underscore the point that Barthes begins his essay by quoting a line from the renowned French writer Honore de Balzac’s story in which a castrato in woman’s disguise utters the above stated words. He wonders whose voice can be heard in this sentence! It could be the author, the character, the author disguised as a woman, or even the author who professes femininity. Is he the hero of the story? One wonders if it is “Balzac the individual, furnished by his personal experience with a philosophy of a woman” or “Balzac the author professing literary ideas on femininity?” There are so many aspects that create lingering doubts in the reader’s minds that remain unresolved. In the opinion of Barthes, writing kills every voice because writing is a space where all identity is lost. The

moment a “fact is narrated”, the voice loses its origin. The beginning of the writing spells the death of the author. It is as if the work lives through the author- “the voice of a single person confiding in us.” Barthes thus sums up by stating that, “writing is the destruction of every kind of voice, of every point of origin. Writing is that natural space where our subject slips away, the negative where all identity is lost.” When “writing begins”, he argues, “the voice loses its origin, the author enters into his own death.” In Balzac’s story Sarassine sets out to destroy and eradicate the humanistic notion of culture and human situation.

One always wonders how the author can be dead. I do not want to dissect his essay (as it has already been done by the critics) rather I want to decipher some of the most essential norms. One may definitely pose a question, if the author is dead, then what good are the books in our present society and how do we possibly assess the contribution of the authors? Critics can cook up their own ideas, but the very notion that the author is dead, reeks of sophism.

Critics have a tough job of critiquing art in any form as readers deriving great pleasure in assaying a writer’s artwork. Everyone is entitled to an opinion because every artwork is open to interpretation but one must always appreciate the author’s standpoint on his writing. Philosophers and theorists can

philosophize to their hearts' content, irrespective of how accurate their theories are. Perhaps we may be better off unearthing the purposes and intention that the author has behind that particular piece of writing. Who knows that the author has in mind while writing a particular topic? Every author has his own ideas, and probably that is what counts the most. To me, it seems like an unfounded claim when Barthes' says that the "moment a fact is narrated" the author loses its voice of origin.

The author is the ultimate critic and he has the authority to showcase his main intention and purposes behind narrating a single fact. He has the highest authority to reformulate, reassess, reanalyse his ideas and notions in different ways, He can even deconstruct his own writing. We, as readers, must accept that the author injects the germ of the idea in our minds and the readers are merely trying to decode the thoughts behind every stroke of his pen. Foucault in his essay, *What is an Author?* stated that, "the author functions as function which is accepted even by those who deny the author." An author does not imitate the idea, rather he embodies the idea. An author can create which is definitely not an imitation but rather an embodiment of the vision which in turn is imitated by the reader. The author may be physically absent, but he remains there as the functional principle and the holy torch-

bearer. He is the “phenomenon” whose voice can be heard, as if it pervades throughout the text.

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Perched high on the mighty Himalayan range, the Kingdom of Bhutan has defied globalization and chosen to remain a covert paradise, accessible only to a fortunate few. It's being known that Bhutan, an abode of gods, is the last bastion of Vajrayana Buddhism -a spiritual practice common in the Buddhist world. The consecrated monasteries that rest upon the sheer cliffs precariously, the fluttering prayer flag in the high ridges and the red robed monks chanting psalms and hymns showcases this pious kingdom -an aura, exempted from virulence and mundane malignity. The onslaught of globalization is balanced with the immense values that have kept the entire society ensemble through the ages.

Bhutan has evolved from a feudal society that was sparsely dissipated over the rugged mountain terrain, but The Land of Thunder Dragon made its way gently to enter the new era, which is now being steeped in modern bureaucracy. It is often said, "Bhutan is determined to be guided by the values and priorities that have helped it to remain a unique country in a rapidly

changing world." However, the Bhutanese have enticed a rich and copious culture and profound heritage and made it the essence of their unique identity. They are truly in possession of immense culture, reputed heritage and most notably various types of 'craft'. In this article I would like to unveil the essential traits of Bhutanese handicraft (precisely textiles and handlooms) and especially traditional cultures, arts and artifacts -an unexplored history precisely to say.

Before I do so, it will be perhaps worthwhile to have a look into the myriad aspects of the Bhutanese civilization.

Bhutan is a unique land and having survived the centuries by maintaining a distinct identity, they acutely hopes to confront the future by hauling on its past. Until the 20th century the authoritarian regime was mostly mythological. The eight century saint, Guru Rinpoche, insinuated the Buddhist culture that immured the Bhutanese society within its precincts and Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal established the notion of nationhood in the 17th century. The establishment of hereditary monarchy in 1907 ratifies and ordained the Bhutanese history and culture.

Ugyen Wangchuck and Jigme Wangchuck, the first two Bhutanese kings, consolidated the nation firmly under an absolute monarchy with a traditional hierarchical culture of governance.

The kings governed the Bhutanese citizens directly from the royal court which aided the rural society in maintaining a liaison with the king by owing him their sincere reverence. The third ruler promulgated the concept of modernization in the 1950s and the inception of the formal process of a well-planned modernization in the year 1961 set apart Bhutan culturally as well as historically, immensely from rest of the world. India became the major supporter and Bhutan gradually unfolded herself to the world by ratifying links with the United Nations in 1972 and, eventually, 21 other countries. And, finally, the fourth king Jigme Singye Wangchuck ascended to the throne in 1972 and eagerly ameliorated the development process. The Land of the Thunder Dragon now stands on the "threshold of historic change as the traditional monarchy makes a dramatic transition into a democratic constitutional monarchy" (Drukgyel Dzong). Societies are being restructured to respond to new policies, decrees and infralapsarianism where a nation is now governed by modern laws. It's also a queer issue that Bhutan chose to remain in complete seclusion *sans* any contact with the other parts of the world.

While exploring myriad aspects of Bhutan, I feel like unfastening the ancient Buddhist cultural festivals which are undoubtedly the modes of expressing their traditions, blissfully.

These festivals are held in all districts in honour of Guru Rinpoche, the theist who proclaimed Buddhism in the 8th century. *Tsechus* are held on auspicious days. The *Tsechus* "are a rich form of the oral historical tradition where the Bhutanese pass on values, mythology and spiritual beliefs through the dance dramas" (Singye). The monks perform this special masked dance that are the "inspirations of enlightened beings in history"; and the Bhutanese firmly believe that watching these mystical dances is "essential to gain enlightenment." Many of the *Tsechus* culminate with a rare display of a giant silk *appliqué thangka* (painting) depicting Guru Padmasambava and some other important Buddhist deity. The utmost consecration and theism of the Bhutanese people make these festivals a contour of religiosity, environed with a convivial ambience.

Finally, I would like to showcase the skillful 'craft' (art and artifacts) of the Bhutanese civilisation that have been portrayed in resplendent weaves by the meticulous weavers.

Textiles are used in everyday life and serve the purposes of clothing. Utilitarian textiles are made intricately and are woven skillfully, then embroidered or *appliquéd* according to certain specifications and later stitched into finished products. Three types of looms are used in Bhutan. The backstrap loom known as *panthag* is generally accepted as the indigenous loom. Second

kind of used loom is *thrithag* or the horizontal frame looms, introduced from Tibet in the first half of the century. Third kind of loom is widely used for specifically narrow textiles *shoguthag*. Traditionally these looms were considered as the essential household items and occupy prominent places and were imbued with potentialities of creativity and wealth. It is being said by the Bhutanese, " Our handlooms have evolved over the centuries and reflect the country's distinctive identity. Most of the designs and patterns of weaves are unique to the country." *Gho* and *Kira* are the national costume of the Bhutanese woven out of various fibres like *Bura* (wild silk), cultivated silk, cotton, nettle, wool and yak hair. Bhutanese men also create marvellous textiles which are predominately embroidery and *appliqué*. The textiles that men make are used in Dzong's fortresses, temples and mainly monasteries. These textiles are different from those which women usually weave. The textile produced by men includes *thrikhep* throne covers, *gayok* saddle covers, *uzham* crowns and others for religious purposes. Needless to say, that the Bhutanese weavers have been very innovative in their designs and maintaining the traditional art which is reflected in the many textiles that have renowned patterns as well as designs created to suit both national and international demands.

Let us now have a brief look at the cultural and artistic artifacts of Bhutanese civilization.

Traditional paintings called *thangka* are produced in scroll format. It is created as a painting on cloth, embroidery or an *appliqué* and they are often commissioned as donations for temple and shrines and is quite portable in rolled form. Even the National Museum of Bhutan display some of the rarest masterpieces made in Bhutan which includes handcrafted copper teapots, jewellery and fine arts. The word *Tshogzhing* refers to the "protection offered to Buddhist practitioners by different Buddhist deities and spiritual adepts. The clay figure which is so eye-catching was handcrafted in the 1970s by two master sculptors, Lopen Damcho and Lopen Palden. Historically and spiritually significant, these are executed in precious metals, slate or even ivory and is often believed that it brings good luck to the devotees. Mind arresting historical figures, Buddhas, significant goddesses are nestled side by side, offering a survey of myriad ways in which divine nature has been expressed through this divinely art. A holy land encompassed by spiritual people who practiced both Hinduism and Buddhism firmly.

It's being known that there are more than 10,000 *chortens* (stupas) and more than 2000 monasteries in this pious kingdom in order to preach Buddhist culture, religion and history. Spiritual

seekers can trace ample venerable sites and pay their reverence to quench their thirst of spiritual consecration. Needless to say, the *Tsechus* are still existing and asserting its existence despite of having a fast changing world.

In this paper, I would also like to focus on the significance of varied types of dancing.

After a meticulous research I came to know about *Drametse Ngacham* (Drum Dance of Drametse), The *Ging* Dance and *Tsholing* and certainly the Mask Dance which drags not only varied significance rather underneath this ceremonial performance lies profound spiritual myths- a dogma. Agape and in a trance was I, when so many spiritual innuendos explored and discovered.

Drametse Ngacham or Drum Dance of Drametse emerged after Khedrup Kunga Nyingpo had a 'vision' of Guru Padmasambhava's attendants in firmament or Heaven or Paradise. They had metamorphosed themselves into either peaceful or wrathful deities and performed a sacred dance with drums. However, this Guru later has preached about the significance of this dance to his devotees. Ever since, this dance was performed across Bhutan by abbots and monks and *Gomchens* (priest) in their respective monasteries thereby

creating a ceremonial ambience which pulls numerous spiritual spectators and other voyagers.

Ging Dance, the first phase, which depicts the heavenly paradise of Guru Padsambhava. The dancers are dressed as heroes and fairy goddesses while simultaneously wearing terrifying masks worth enough to evoke fear. *Tsholing* dance is a type of dance where the dancers present the "subdued regional protectors with their retinue of the eight classes of spirits" (Kundra). However there is an intriguing aspect of this type of dancing as it involves willingly the spectator's participation. And it's an acclaimed fact that this participation brings peace, restore mindfulness along with spiritual awareness, thereby manumitting themselves from earthly pain, agony and suffering.

The mask dances trace their origins to Vajrayana Buddhist traditions with *tantric* inspiration as well as motivation of firm commiseration. In the 8th century, the renowned *tantric* master, Guru Padmasambhava, arrived in this pious land and subdued the envious malevolent spirit and at the same time disseminating Buddhist teachings and ideals. From a trusted source (name withdrawn on request) I came to know that he took eight manifestations in order to subdue the evil and spiteful forces and thereby binding them to protect the laws of Dharma. Thus, the "Guru Tshengye mask dance commemorates the Guru

Padmasambhava's victory over opposing evil spirit forces and thereby aligning them with the Buddha's teachings" (Kzungpo). There is undoubtedly a great merit in viewing the sacred mask dances and it's been considered a part of spiritual experience in itself -a tenet of firm belief and faith in this fast propagating culture. The spectator is endowed with merit and assurance of manumission from the *samsaric* (material) world. It has also to be noted that each dance has a particular purpose. For example, the *Bardo Chham* (intermediate dance) introduced by Tertön Karma Lingpa in the 14th century, is believed "to provide spectators with the spiritual opportunity to reaffirm their devotion to Dharma and lead a virtuous life" (Kundra). Similarly, other dances include the *Peling Gingsum*, credited to Pema Lingpa as well as the Drum Dance from Drametse which has been introduced by Khedrup in the 16th century and the most notably *Mahakali* introduced by Gyalsey Ganapati in the 17th century and many such others.

While exploring the intriguing cultures, myth and tradition of Bhutanese spiritual dance I came to know about a fact which is not only perplexing and mind boggling but rather alarming.

"Not having enough people, who can perform mask dances, could soon put an end to the community *tshechus* in Trashilgang, a much-awaited annual event for many...Every *tshechu* that usually went on for three days needed over 50 mask

dancers to perform different dances. In three days, both laymen and *gomchens* performed over 17 different dances...Phongmey gup Palden Dorji said, since people have started showing lack of interest in mask dances, they had to persuade villagers to join in every year... (and the final assurance to this dilemma is)...Something needs to be done to bring in people, who know the dances and are available for the tsechus." [Source: *Kuensel*; Tempa Wangdi, Trashigang]. It's indeed shatter news no doubt which pulled me to delve into this. With an inquisitive mood I began my enquiry and land up with a much-expected reply from the holy priest. "Technology and science is the ultimate cause of this demarcation...It's demarcating us slowly yet steadily from the holy cultures! People are changing fast in this technological world and they have no time to spare in our sacred ceremony. How will they ever liberate themselves when they have already started thriving in material comforts?", said he in a very mellow tone. I stood flummoxed and speechless. No doubt what he has said is true but on the other hand this earthly material luxuries and comforts are pulling us like a magnet. How can one deny the benefits of science? There is none to answer; as the question I put before the entire mankind is itself thought provoking. But it's a well reckoning fact that this spite of technology and evils of

civilization has slowly been injected which is capable enough to uproot their spiritualism and decimate their consecrated cultures.

Nevertheless, Bhutan is still an abode of gods- I firmly believe it's truly an abode of the Bhutanese and we are nonetheless but sojourners in this divine land -is the man's last unventured destination. Their history, culture and tradition are nothing but an unexplored myth to *étrangers* like us. That is how the citizens exempted Bhutan from the intruders. Tranquility has been austere maintained in every nook, asunder and dis severed from mundane malice, spite and earthly rancor. This culturally and spiritually inherited place is being pervaded with one universal proverb: "take nothing but pictures, leave nothing but footsteps..."

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“There were some among the unemployed who accepted joblessness as a way of life – and others who abused the system. But in their different ways, both of these categories were an indictment of post war politicians who had manipulated an affluent economy in their own interests. The remainder of the unemployed –those who desperately wanted to find a suitable job, but could not do so for one good reason or another – were no better off than their counterparts had been in the 1930s.” Notwithstanding the evidence that throughout the twentieth century unemployment was the basic problem in Indian scenario and political life. The crisis related to unemployment is nearly confederated with the trade union movement in the twentieth century which exposed and showcased the complications brought about by the inequality discernible in labour-industry relations.

Before we penetrate into the current economic affair, let us have a look on the pre-colonial period where one is able to witness the evidence of well-planned drainage and the urban-planning, which covered the world’s first urban sanitation systems

and the existence of a form of municipal government. The citizens of the Indus Valley Civilizations not only practiced agriculture but also traded with other cities. It is thus, evidenced that the assessment of India's pre-colonial economy is most qualitative. From several historical sources it has been known that the Mughal economy functioned on an elaborate system of colonial currency, land revenue and trade. "The political stability and uniform revenue policy resulting from a centralized administration under the Mughals, coupled with a well developed internal trade network ensured that India, before the arrival of the British, was to a large extent economically unified, despite having a traditional agrarian economy characterized by a predominance of subsistence agriculture dependent on primitive technology." And by the end of the eighteenth century, the British East India Company managed to enter the Indian political scenario and the coercive inception of the dominance marked by a determinative shift in India's trade and left a powerful impact on the rest of the economy.

Manmohan Singh, the former Prime Minister of India, has rightly commented, "There is no doubt that our grievances against the British Empire had a sound basis. As the painstaking statistical work of the Cambridge historical Angus Maddison has shown in 1700, almost equal to Europe's share of 23.3% at that time, to as

low as 3.8% in 1952. Indeed, at the beginning of the twentieth century the brightest jewel in the British crown, “was the poorest country in the world in terms of per capita income.”

The economic development in India followed socialist – inspired policies for most of its independent history, including state-ownership of many sectors, and more recent studies has highlighted the fact that, India’s per capita income increased to only 1% annualized rate in the three decades after independence. Since the mid-1980s, India has slowly opened up its markets through economic liberalization. After more fundamental reforms since 1991 and their renewal in the 2000s, India has progressed towards a “free market economy.” If we compare the economic progress to that of the economy of China, we stood flabbergasted. The reason is that the socialist market economy of China which is the world’s second largest exporter and importer of goods in the world and is undoubtedly the world’s fastest growing major economy with growth rates averaging 10% over the past thirty year. Era on a per capita income basis, China is far ahead than that of present India.

China is not only the world’s largest producer and consumer of agricultural products but also, according to the United Nations’ *World Food Program*. In 2003, China fed 20% of the world’s population with only 7% of the world’s arable land.

For 2014, India ranked 132nd in “Ease of Doing Business Index”, which is a setback as compared to China and according to the Index of “Economic Freedom” world ranking (an annual survey on economic freedom of the nations) India ranks 123rd.

However, India ranks second worldwide in farm output. India is the largest producer in the world of milks, cashew nuts, coconuts, tea, ginger, turmeric and black pepper. Agriculture and allied sectors like forestry, logging and fishing accounted for 18.6% of the GDP in 2005, employed 60% of the total workforce and despite a steady decline of 17% share in GDP which is still the largest economic sector and plays a significant role in the overall socio-economic development of India. “Yields per unit area of all crops have frown since 1950, due to the special emphasis placed on agriculture in the five-year plans and steady improvements in irrigation, technology, application of modern agricultural practices and provision of agricultural credit and subsidies since the green revolution.”

The first appearance of cities and urban employment in India can be traced with the advent of the Indus Valley Civilization. But after the decline of the Indus Valley Civilization it led to a migration towards northern India during the Vedic Civilization. After Independence, India had encountered poverty, unemployment and economic backlash. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru,

the first Prime Minister of India, focused on the domain of science and technology for economic development, and thus, the “mixed economy” system was adopted, resulting in the growth of the public sector in India. “The contribution of the agricultural sector to the GDP of India started to decline and the percentage contribution from secondary sector increased.”

Urbanization in India was mainly caused after Independence, due to the adoption of the mixed economic system, as stated above, which gave rise to the development of private sector. Urbanization is taking place at foster rate in India. If we cited the reasons behind Urbanization, the following causes of it gets focused –expansion in government services, as a result of second world war, migration of people from Pakistan after partition of India, the Industrial Revolution, infrastructural facilities and the growth of private sector after 1990 and the eleventh five year plan that aimed at urbanization for the economic development in India. Population residing in urban areas in India, according to 1901 census was 11.4%. This account has been increased to 28.53% according to 2001 census and crossed 30% as per 2011 census. Though it may appear contradictory and controversial, “India, along with China, Indonesia, Nigeria and the United States, will lead the world’s

urban population survey by 2050.” This is according to the statement of World Bank.

One cannot negotiate the ill-effects of urbanization and today’s economic growth reaches a slow development in the process, is mainly due to the negative impact of urbanization. Rapid rise in urban population in India is leading to many problems like increasing slums and decrease in standard of living in urban areas which is causing environmental damage. India has around 300 million people living in metropolitan areas, and this has greatly caused slum problems, over-crowding cities and forcing people to live in unsafe conditions and thus, water lines, roads, electricity are lacking which results in far of living standards. Pollution is also a dreadful effect of urbanization. This should be checked and controlled. Urbanization also results in a disparity in the market owing to the large demands of the growing population and the primary sector struggling to cope with them. All these are the factors which acts as a hindrance in the path of economic growth and progress and the current scenario won’t improve and ameliorate until and unless our present government delves into this grave solemn matter.

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INFERENCE

I would like to draw my inference by quoting Marcus Tullius Cicero, 'A room without books is like a body without a soul.' Without knowledge and literacy man turns pallid and wan. Francis Bacon in *Of Studies* has clearly underlined how 'Reading maketh a perfect man', and that what I adore most.

'A poet or philosopher should have no fault to find with his age if it only permits him to do his work undisturbed in his own corner; nor with his fate if the corner granted him allows of his following his vocation without having to think about other people', (Arthur Schopenhauer, *Art of Literature*) is what defines me somehow. Being an aficionado of literature, I'm determined to advance my literary voyage and affirm to bring up more such assembled research papers under this same title *Réfléchir- A Paradigm of Self Reflections and Creative Insight* in the near future, as my unquenchable thirst for literary art and philosophy will never exsiccate and wither away.

"And miles to go before I sleep..."

Author